

love for their country. We should all be instructed by that.

While Congress is seemingly more divided than ever, our inability to find common ground is making us less competitive on the world stage, less prosperous, and is getting in the way of solving big problems.

We were all sent here by our constituents to put the work in and to better our districts. When there are only fights and no bipartisan cooperation, it is our constituents, not us, who suffer. Please remember that.

I made working across the aisle a priority during my 8 years in the House, and I can leave here knowing I achieved real results, along with my great team. I worked every day to make my district in central New York and this country better.

So, for the last time, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the United States House of Representatives, I yield back.

REFLECTIONS ON FAMILY AND PUBLIC SERVICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the final time, I rise to address this Chamber, and I am leaving here with a heart full of gratitude.

When I reflect on the path I have traveled, I still can't believe it is real—a baby girl born in post-war Vietnam to parents facing persecution by the Communist government. We fled our homeland by boat and were rescued by American sailors. Our family was given refuge, granted citizenship, and provided opportunity in the United States.

My mom and dad worked so hard to make ends meet. They struggled to overcome barriers of language and culture, all so that I could have a better life than they did.

My happiest childhood memories are of fishing with my father. On the water, he told me stories of his old life in Vietnam. His new life in America wasn't easy, but I know he felt blessed to be an American.

Those who have endured the absence of freedom and safety rarely take their presence for granted.

As I grew up, I was encouraged and mentored by so many generous people who expected nothing in return. I remember hoping that, one day, I might be in a position to help people just as they helped me.

Over time, I realized that government service was a good way for me to chisel away at the infinite debt of gratitude I owe this country. I also discovered that it infused my professional life with a sense of purpose.

After the 9/11 attacks, I spent a few years at the Department of Defense, and it was a privilege to work alongside American patriots. I admired their singular focus on the mission: keeping our country safe from those who sought her harm. From them, I learned about courage and commitment.

A decade later, I heard the siren song of public service once again. I had moved to central Florida. I was the mother of two young children and worked at jobs in the private sector I enjoyed, but I was worried about polarization in our political system.

Although deep divisions in American politics have existed since the dawn of our Republic, there was something in the atmosphere that felt especially poisonous. Too many Democratic and Republican leaders failed to treat one another with civility and decency. They were unwilling to express policy differences without making personal attacks or using irresponsible rhetoric.

Extreme partisanship led to legislative gridlock, and communities across the country paid the price, including my own.

When a gunman shot 49 innocent people at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, it seemed like yet another preventable tragedy that might have been avoided if common sense and political courage were on greater display in our Nation's Capitol.

If you want to change Washington, you have to change the type of people you are sending there, I said to myself, and I thought I could do my part to make things just a little bit better. So, I launched a long-shot campaign for the people's House, inspired by Teddy Roosevelt's view that the credit belongs to the man, or the woman, in the arena.

I was so excited when I became the first Vietnamese-American woman ever elected to Congress, and I thought about all the people who had lifted me up over the years. I confess I also thought about the people who underestimated me.

I wish my dad were alive to see what his daughter had done so that he would know his sacrifices were worth it. I vowed to work every day to prove I was worthy of the faith my constituents had placed in me.

As my congressional career draws to a close, I am proud of my service. I hope I earned the respect of those I represented, whether they were Democrats, Republicans, or neither, or whether they voted for me or would never dream of voting for me.

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This job isn't easy, but nothing truly worth doing is. There are few places where you can make such a difference in people's lives as you can in the United States Congress.

Ask the veteran who finally received the benefit they earned thanks to the congressional office who broke through the bureaucratic red tape.

Ask the millions of Americans who got health and economic aid during the worst of the pandemic.

Ask the billions of people who will live on a cooler, cleaner planet because of the green investments we have made.

Ask the lion-hearted people of Ukraine who defend their land with

weapons we gave them because their fight is our fight.

And ask the police officers who risked their lives on January 6 and who, hopefully, find comfort in the fact that there is a bipartisan committee that seeks to honor their valor by telling the truth about that terrible day.

I will miss this place, but, above all, I will miss the people. I have had wonderful colleagues, some of whom have become lifelong friends. My staff has been like a second family to me, loyal and devoted. We have had so much fun together and achieved so much for our constituents and our country. To honor them I will be entering their names in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Thank you, Team Murphy.

To my real family—Sean, Liem, Maya, and Kona: I love you. None of this would have been possible or meaningful without you. You are going to be seeing much more of me, as you requested, and as you may come to regret.

I want to end with a word to young Americans, including young girls who look like me. I hope you consider government service. It requires many sacrifices, but the work is important and noble. Our Nation needs good people with steady hands to steer the ship of state: people with integrity; people with common sense who seek common ground; and patriots willing to put the public interest above their personal interests.

Representing my community and my country in Congress has been the greatest honor of my life.

I include in the RECORD the names of my staffers.

Michael Abare, Lauren Allen, Lauren Calmet, Eduardo Carrizosa, Jennifer Carton, Rosnelly Chavarria, David Cox, Gabriel Cruz, Alli Everton, Erica Fuller, Carolyn Haggis, Ken Heidegger, Javier Hernandez, Brad Howard, Justin Karlins, Rachel Kline, MacKensie Kvalvik, John Laufer, James Loomis, Lale Mamaux Morrison, Katherine Marrs, Natalie Martinez, Tamel McKinney, Phoebe Miner, Bruce Moody, Dao Nguyen, David Ogle, Stephanie Palacios, Zoë Prince, Juliana Puente, Jeff Rapp, Nicole Reyes, Adam Safran, Thomas Steenekamp, Christie Stephenson, Kyle Thorp, Emma Trittin, Mark Tucker, Jonathan Uriarte, Christy Wagner, and Madelyn Wiseman.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CONWAY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CONWAY. Mr. Speaker, while my service in Congress has been brief, it has been the privilege of a lifetime. When Congressman Devin Nunes—who was my Congressman—district was redistricted away, I felt that perhaps my prior service as a county supervisor, as the minority leader in the California State House, and as a Presidential appointee might lend me some expertise to finish the term for Congressman Nunes and represent the constituents of California's Central Valley.

I must say that I felt very welcome here by the California delegation on

both sides. I had served with many of them in other capacities, so I felt very welcome.

I want to mention very quickly my staff, my prior staff, and my staff now. They know once you have served with Ms. CONWAY, you are a staffer for life.

I also want to thank the staff of this building. Even coming here today I got a little turned around. I know where I am going politically; I am just not sure of the building. So all the staff has been very gracious. I think they actually all know me by first name: the effervescent Ms. CONWAY.

When I was sworn in, I promised the good people of California's Central Valley that they would be the only special interest I represent. I hope they believe that I kept my word.

Congress is not a particularly popular institution right now, and a good dose of the criticism is well-deserved. Serving in Congress doesn't make you a hero and should not break any privilege except the privilege of serving this country. Instead of citizen-legislators, we have many professional politicians today, and perhaps some Americans would prefer that more Members served just 6 months, like I am, rather than for decades.

Nevertheless, I have always had a healthy respect for anyone who puts themselves out there and runs for public office. We need public servants to develop good ideas for solving problems, to present these ideas to their communities, and to advance those solutions in Congress.

In short, this country—the leader of the free world—is worth the conversations, the efforts, and the fights that happen here and on the campaign trail, notwithstanding all the messy unpleasantness that goes with the process.

As Americans it is easy for us to forget how rare and precious self-government has been throughout the world. Each and every day that I have stepped into this historic Capitol, I have stood in wonder and awe of how truly amazing this place is and how truly amazing the opportunity is to serve this country.

In Washington I have found that despite all the current bitterness in Congress—I am getting a little emotional—there were a range of issues, including the California water crisis, in which there is a good chance for bipartisan cooperation.

Moving forward, I urge my colleagues to explore every possibility to work together on water, wildfires, energy, and other pressing issues, knowing that families are counting on us to solve the big problems that impact them daily.

As my service nears its end, I would like to thank my family. They did not take the oath of office, but they have certainly shared with me in this. My heartfelt appreciation—and I use the word heart—goes to my husband, Craig, who actually, 8½ weeks ago, had a heart transplant and is doing well thanks to God; my sons, Anthony and Tim; and my dear grandchildren, Caine

and Autrey. I also can't forget our dog, Jake, who doesn't miss me, but I do miss him a lot when I am here.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about my constituents back home. The Valley's agricultural communities work hard to feed the Nation. Most people buying their produce, meat, and milk at stores throughout the country have no idea where that food comes from or all the effort it took to get it to them.

Maintaining the well-being of these communities is a national security issue. Unfortunately, many Americans will only realize that in the most dramatic way if conditions in these communities become so difficult that people simply decide they can't continue working and growing any longer.

In California, especially lately, Silicon Valley gets all the headlines. While I am sure the tech executives deep down inside are nice people and they are smart people, they don't feed a lot of the families.

The Central Valley of California is the main pillar of our Nation's food chain. Its residents are my heroes. They are people who get up every day, go to work, pay their taxes, worship at their place of choice, and donate to charity when they can. I think all they really want to accomplish is to live their best life and maybe go to their kids' or their grandkids' soccer games on the weekend. Most people don't live and breathe politics like we do, but their work ultimately funds everything we do in Washington, and we can never forget them and that we are here with the single purpose of serving them.

So I would like to sign off by expressing my love and pride in the people of California's Central Valley who sent me here in the first place and to whom I shall return.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. LURIA) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LURIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as we approach the conclusion of the 117th Congress and as I near the end of my service in this esteemed body.

As I reflect on the multitude of challenges this Nation and the world has faced over these 4 short years and those that lie ahead, I thank my colleagues and our leadership for the seriousness and dedication with which they have tackled these challenging issues.

I thank my staff in Washington who are here and those in our three district offices for their tireless dedication to the people of Virginia's Second District. They have assisted so many who needed a helping hand—everyone from farmers to shipbuilders across coastal Virginia.

I thank my family: my husband, Robert, and my daughter, Violet. I couldn't have been here and served the district and the people of Virginia without them.

I also want to acknowledge the strength and the bond of the class of 2018. They have been amazing colleagues and true friends, and I know that they will continue to be leaders and focus on improving our country for the next generation.

We entered Congress under a partial government shutdown which was a legacy of a protracted battle of how to fund security at our southern border—a 35-day lapse in government funding. It was the longest in our history. On my first weekend in office I visited a pop-up food bank for members of our Coast Guard where the local community rallied around our Coast Guard families who were starting the new year without a paycheck. This was a story of our community stepping in to care for one another, which is so common, and something that I heard repeatedly across these 4 years in every corner of our district.

But there are also stories of how the distraction caused by political theater and political division can lead to unnecessary hardship. As we approach a looming deadline this year to fund our government, we should not let these divisions or rhetoric stand in the way of performing our fundamental role as Congress.

On May 31, 2019—a day that remains etched in the memory of Virginia Beach—I saw the devastation caused by the first of two mass shootings that roiled our community. That day, 12 innocent victims left home for work before the Memorial Day weekend—a time they looked forward to spending with their families at barbecues and the beaches—yet instead their lives were senselessly stolen by a shooter who entered the municipal center and indiscriminately opened fire.

Again, just weeks ago on the eve of Thanksgiving, a shooter opened fire in a local Chesapeake Walmart where shoppers were grabbing their last-minute items for a holiday meal. This time our community lost six more precious lives who would not join their families at the holiday table. Among these losses was a 16-year-old boy. This Congress has taken small measures to prevent these types of tragic events in our community and yours, Mr. Speaker, but as I depart, I implore my colleagues to continue to do more.

The first time I stood in this very place to speak on the floor of the House, I rose as a Jewish woman to speak out against anti-Semitism which has seen a rapid and alarming rise and has even reared its head among our colleagues in this body in the form of claims of dual loyalty towards those who show support for Israel—our strongest ally in the Middle East. I look back on that first speech I made as a Member of Congress and am even more concerned today about the rising frequency and pervasiveness of anti-Semitism. I implore my colleagues to continue their quest to root out this scourge of vile and pernicious anti-Semitism.